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28 May 2023

Sally Baker
Headteacher
St Luke's CofE First School
Plymouth Road North
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Worcestershire
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Dear Sally Baker,

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of St Luke's CofE First School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and your senior leader, the governors, a representative from the local authority, and a representative from the diocese, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also conducted learning walks, spoke with staff, met with pupils, and met with subject leaders. I have considered this in coming to my judgement.

St Luke's Church of England First School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn in all areas of the curriculum, and to sequence this effectively, so that pupils can build on their learning over time.

Main findings

There has been a significant change in leadership and in staffing since the previous inspection. You started as headteacher in September 2022. Prior to this, there had been a change in the governing body, including the appointment of a new chair and vice chair of governors. This change in leadership and governance meant that the changes that were needed did not start to take effect until your appointment.

You have a clear vision for what you want for the pupils at St Luke's. You have precisely identified the strengths and areas for development for the school and set about tackling the weaknesses that you have identified with determination and rigour. Some areas of this work have not yet had time to have the impact that you intend.

You have started work on making sure that the curriculum sets out clearly what all pupils should know and remember. You rightly identify that this underpins the rest of the work that you need to do on the curriculum. In some subjects, subject leaders have identified the important learning that pupils need and have set this out in a logical order. In these subject areas, pupils build on their prior learning and make good progress through the curriculum. In other subjects, this important knowledge is not as clearly identified and sequenced and, at times, teachers do not make sure that their choice of teaching activity matches the knowledge that they want pupils to know. In these cases, pupils do not remember their learning as well as they could, and assessment is not used well enough to identify next steps for pupils. You have made sure that pupils who are ready to extend their learning are able to deepen and broaden their understanding of the topics being taught. However, where the curriculum is not as well sequenced as it could be, these activities chosen by teachers do not always provide pupils with the deeper knowledge that you would like.

Since September, you have made reading a whole school priority. Pupils benefit from a high-quality phonics curriculum. Staff deliver this curriculum well. You have made sure that pupils are given books that match their phonic knowledge. As a result, more pupils are learning to read fluently. Leaders have reviewed the reading curriculum to make sure that all pupils have access to well-considered books. This has helped to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading.

You have reviewed the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make sure that pupils get the help that they need. However, the needs of pupils are still not identified precisely enough and so teachers do not know how best to help them to access the curriculum. When their needs are not planned for well enough in lessons these pupils miss out on important learning. This is, in part, because the curriculum is not sequenced well enough.

You value the support from the local authority and diocese to help improve the school. You find this support most helpful when it is aligned with the priorities you and the governors have identified.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Worcester, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Worcestershire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Price
His Majesty's Inspector